

THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

THE NINTH & TENTH
COMMANDMENTS



FOR HIM WHO WOULD LIVE ALL THE PROPHETS WITNESS

THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVING HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP

EDINBURGH & GALL & INGLIS

at 'Helen
Carter no 3

THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

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THE NINTH & TENTH COMMANDMENTS

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THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVETH HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP.



The covetous man loves his gold with all his heart By this he breaks the first four commandments. He loves his gold more than he loves his neighbour. By this he breaks the last six commandments.—p. 36.

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THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

The Ninth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."
EXODUS XX. 16.

THIS commandment is about bearing witness. At once the question arises; What is to bear witness? As commonly understood, this refers, to what takes place in courts of law, where a person is being tried for some offence with which he is charged.

Suppose you are in the market. While you are standing there, two men get to quarrelling. From words they fall to blows. At last one of them draws a dagger and stabs the other. If the wounded man dies, the other will be brought into court, by and by, to be tried for his life. Then, you, and the rest of the people who saw the fight, would be summoned into court as witnesses. This means, that you would have to stand up there, and tell all that you knew about the quarrel, every thing that you saw and heard. When you were telling this, you would be bearing witness. If you gave a correct account, you would be a true witness. But if you kept back part of what you saw and heard, or told about it differently from the way in which it

took place, then you would be bearing false witness. It is a great sin to bear false witness, because before a person begins to speak as a witness, he is obliged to take a solemn oath that he will tell nothing but the truth; and to tell a lie after this, is very dreadful. Simple-minded persons, and very young children, are not allowed to appear as witnesses in court, because they are not supposed to understand how solemn the oath is, which they are required to take before they speak as witnesses.

Not very long ago, a little girl, only nine years old, was brought forward as a witness, in the trial of a person for stealing. The robbery had been committed in the house of the little girl's father. She had seen it. Her testimony was very important. The lawyer who was defending the thief, didn't want this little girl to appear as a witness. He knew that what she had to say, would be very much against his side of the question. So when she was brought in, he said to her;—

"Emily, do you know the nature of an oath?"

"I don't know what you mean, sir," said she.

"*There*, may it please your honour," said the lawyer to the judge; "she doesn't understand the nature of an oath. Is not this sufficient evidence that she is not fit for a witness? I submit that she be rejected."

"Let us see," said the judge. "Come here my little daughter. Have you ever taken an oath?"

The red blood rose to her face and neck, at the very thought of it, as she answered,—

"No, sir."

"I do not mean a profane oath," said the judge.

"Were you ever a witness in court before?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know what book this is," said the judge, handing her a Bible.

"Yes, sir; it is the Bible."

"Have you ever read that book?"

"Yes, sir; I read it every evening."

"Do you know what the Bible is, my child?"

"It is the Word of the Great God."

"Now, my little dear, place your hand upon this book."

She put her hand upon it tremblingly. He then repeated to her the form of the oath taken by one who is to be a witness. With her hand upon the Bible, she said;—"I do solemnly swear, that what I am now about to say, is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me God."

"Now, my dear," said the judge, "you have sworn as a witness; do you know what the result will be if you do not speak the truth?"

"Yes, sir."

"What?"

"I shall be locked up in the State Prison."

"Any thing else?"

"Yes, sir; I cannot go to heaven."

"How do you know that?"

She took the Bible, ran her fingers over the leaves, and turned to the 20th chapter of Exodus, the 16th verse, and read;—"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." "I learned that," said she, "before I could read the Bible."

"Has any one told you that you were to be a witness in this case?" asked the judge.

"Yes, sir; after mother heard that I was to be called, she took me to her room, and asked me to tell her the ten commandments; and mother and I knelt down, and prayed that I might understand how

wicked it was to bear false witness against a neighbour; and that God would help me to tell the truth if I had to go to court to-morrow. And when I went away mother kissed me, and said to me;— 'Remember the ninth commandment, and remember that whatever you say in court, God hears every word of it.' "

"Do you believe this?" asked the judge, while a tear glistened in his eye, and his lip quivered with emotion.

"Yes, sir," said the child, in a way which showed that she meant what she said.

"God bless you, my child," said the judge, "you have a good mother. This witness is competent," he added. "If I were on trial for my life to-day, and innocent of the charge, I would pray God to give me such a witness as this child. Let her be examined."

This little girl told the truth when she was called upon to speak, as a witness, in court. But we should feel as if we were in court, *at all times*, when we open our lips to speak. This world is like a great court. God is the Judge. Whenever we speak, we speak as witnesses about some person or thing. God, the Judge, has a great book in which He writes down every thing we say. Whenever we say anything that is not true, we are bearing false witness. God says, "for every idle word we speak, we must give account in the day of judgment." And if for every *idle* word, much more for every *false* word.

This commandment requires us, as the Catechism says, "to keep our tongues from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering." Slandering means saying anything that will injure the character of another person. Those who do this break the commandment.

There was a company of ladies once at the house

of a clergyman. As he entered the room, he heard them speaking, in a low voice, of an absent friend. "She's very odd;" says one. "Yes, very singular indeed;" says another. "Do you know, she often does so and so?" says a third, mentioning certain things to her discredit. The clergyman asked who it was. When told, he said;—"Oh! yes, she is odd; she's *very* odd; she's remarkably singular. Why, would you believe it?" he added, in a *slow*, impressive manner; "*she was never heard to speak ill of any absent friends!*"

A clergyman was once examining the children of an infant school upon the commandments. He put his hand on the head of a little boy, and said;—"My little man, can you tell me what the ninth commandment means, by 'bearing false witness against your neighbour?'"

The boy hesitated a while, and then said;—"It means telling lies, sir."

The minister didn't exactly like this answer, so looking at a little girl, who stood next to him, he asked;—"What do *you* say?"

Without waiting a moment, she replied;—"It's when nobody does nothing, and somebody goes and tells of it." "Very good," said the minister.

The little girl's answer was a very funny one; but the little boy's was true. Bearing false witness is telling lies; and telling lies is bearing false witness. We break the ninth commandment, every time we tell a lie. We sometimes hear people talk about different kinds of lies. They call some *little* lies, and others *big* lies; some *white* lies, and others *black* lies. But the Bible only speaks of one kind of lies. Every lie that is spoken, is big enough, and black enough, to break the ninth commandment.

This commandment is so plain that it needs very little explanation. In talking about it then, it will only be necessary to give some reasons why we should not tell a lie, or bear false witness. I wish to speak of reasons why we should not break this commandment. And I wish you to remember, that whether I speak of breaking this commandment, or of bearing false witness, or of lying, I mean the same thing.

The first reason why we should never bear false witness, or tell a lie, is, because it is a **MEAN** thing.

Who was the first person of whom we know, that ever told a lie? Satan. Where was this lie told? In the garden of Eden. Satan bore false witness against God. He contradicted God. He told Eve that she would not die, if she ate of the forbidden fruit—that it would do her good instead of harm. Satan will be known for ever as the *first liar*. This is the reason why the Bible calls him—"the father of lies."

In this way he got Adam and Eve turned out of Eden; and filled the world with misery, sorrow, and death.

This was mean of Satan. He did it out of spite. Adam and Eve had done him no harm. But because he was miserable himself, he couldn't bear to see any body else happy. So without being able to do himself any good, he tried to do them the greatest harm that he could. He is the *meanest* person that can be found.

But every liar, or slanderer, every one who bears false witness, is becoming like Satan. To lie is to do Satan's work. This is his mark. Who wants to bear it? It is one of the meanest of all things. It is a shameful, a disgraceful thing to tell a lie. There is no greater offence that can be given to a respectable honourable person, than to call him a

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When some miserable wretch is hung on the gallows because he is so wicked that he is not fit to live in decent society, wouldn't you be offended if any one should tell you that you were like him? Certainly. But Satan is the meanest and wickedest of all creatures, and there is nothing that helps to make us like him more than lying.

It is said that there is one place in India, where, when a person is found guilty of lying, he is taken to a public place, and in the presence of a multitude of people, his mouth is sewed up.

A gentleman once sent his servant to market with the direction to bring home the *best* thing he could find. He carried home a tongue. He was sent again with the direction to bring home the *worst* thing he could find. Again he brought home a tongue. This was right. For the tongue is the best thing in the world when properly used; or the worst when not so used. The Bible calls it our "*glory*," when used to speak the truth, and to praise God. But when used for lying and swearing, it calls it "*a fire*—a world of iniquity—an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." A false tongue is a disgraceful thing; but one that speaks the truth is an honour and glory.

Let me give you an example of this.

There was once a little boy named Duncan. The boys used to call him "*True Duncan*," because he would never tell a lie. One day during recess, he was playing with an axe, in the school yard, and while he was chopping a stick, the teacher's cat, old Tabby, came along. Duncan let the axe fall right on poor Tabby's back, and killed her.

What to do he knew not. She was the master's pet, and used to sit on a cushion at his side while he was hearing the lessons.

Duncan stood and looked at the dead creature. His face grew red, and the tears stood in his eyes. All the boys came running up, and every one had something to say. One of them was heard whispering to the others thus ;—

"Now, fellows, we'll see whether Duncan can't make up a fib as well as the rest of us."

"Not he," said Tom Pooley, who was Duncan's friend. "Not he ; I'll warrant you, Duncan will be as true as gold."

John Jones stepped up, and taking the cat by the tail, said ;—"Here, boys, I'll just fling her into the alley, and we can tell Mr Cole that the butcher's dog killed her ; you know he worried her last week."

Some of them thought that this would do very well. But Duncan looked quite angry. His cheeks swelled, and his face grew redder than before.

"No !" said he, "no ! Do you think I would *lie* for such a creature as that ? It would be a *lie*, a *LIE* !" Each time he used the word his voice grew louder,

Then he picked up the poor thing and carried her into the school-room. The boys followed to see what would happen.

The master looked up and said ;—"What is this ? my poor Tabby killed ? Who could have done me such an injury ?"

All was silent for a little while. As soon as Duncan could get his voice he said ;—

"Mr Cole, I am very sorry—but here is the truth. I killed poor Tabby. Indeed, sir, I am *very* sorry. I ought to have been more careful, for I saw her

rubbing her side against the log. I am more sorry than I can tell, sir."

Every one expected to see Mr Cole get very angry, take down his rattan, and give Duncan a sound thrashing. But instead of this, he put on a pleasant smile and said ;—

"Duncan, you are a brave boy ! I saw and heard all that passed in the yard, from my window above. I had rather lose a hundred cats than miss such an example of truth and honour in my school. Your best reward is what you now feel in your own conscience ; but I beg you to accept this handsome pen-knife as a token of my approbation."

Duncan took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes.

The boys couldn't keep in any longer ; and when Tom Pooley cried, "Three cheers for True Duncan," they all joined and made the school-house ring with a hearty hurrah.

The teacher then said ;—"My boys, I am glad you know what is right, and that you approve it ; though I am afraid some of you could not have done it. Learn from this time that nothing can make a lie necessary. Suppose Duncan had taken your evil advice, and come to me with a lie ; it would have been instantly detected, and instead of the honour of truth, he would have had only the shame of falsehood."

We should never bear false witness, or tell a lie, because it is a *mean* thing.

The second reason why we should not do it is, because it is an **UNPROFITABLE** thing.

People generally expect to make something when they tell a lie. They think it will be profitable to them.

You remember about Gehazi, the servant of Elisha

When Naaman was cured of his leprosy, by the prophet, he felt so thankful that he wanted the man of God to take ever so much money from him. But Elisha refused to take anything. Gehazi thought this was very foolish. It seemed to him like a good opportunity to get some money. So he ran after Naaman, told him a lie, and asked for a talent of silver, and two suits of clothes, in the name of his master. He said his master wanted these for two theological students, who had just come to see him. A talent of silver was worth nearly four hundred pounds. Theological students must have been better off then, than now, if they were in the habit of receiving such princely presents. Naaman was so glad to think he was cured of his dreadful leprosy, that he was ready to give away almost anything he was asked for. He made Gehazi take two suits of clothes, and two talents of silver, instead of one. I know not how much the clothing was worth; but the two talents of silver were worth nearly eight hundred pounds. And when Gehazi had got these treasures carried to his home and stowed safely away, we may imagine how he chuckled to himself, and rubbed his hands with glee, at the thought of his gains.

"A pretty good day's work!" he may have said to himself. "They may talk as they please about the unprofitableness of lying. I think I've done quite a profitable business to-day!"

But wait a little. He goes into the room where his master is. Elisha looks sternly at him, and asks;—"Where have you been, Gehazi?"

"Nowhere, sir;" says the miserable man, used to lying now, but trembling, and turning deadly pale. Then Elisha began and told him what he had done,

and gave him a *lecture on lying*: the latter part of which, at least, he would never forget. It ended in these dreadful words;—"The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever!" As quick as lightning the fearful disease broke out upon him. "And he went out from the presence of Elisha, a leper, as white as snow."

Poor Gehazi! You have lost your situation, your health, your character, all at once! What do you think of lying, now? I am very sure if he could have spoken to us then, in answer to this question, he would have said;—"I will now be for ever an outcast from society. I can tell you from my own experience, children, that lying is unprofitable."

And Ananias and Sapphira could tell us something about this matter, too, if they could speak. And what multitudes besides could testify to the same thing!

A shopkeeper has a piece of damaged goods which he wishes to be rid of. A person comes into his store, and offers to buy it, if he will warrant it a good article. Now, he thinks he can profit by telling a lie. He says it is of the very best quality, sound, and good. He sells the article. The purchaser finds he is deceived. He says to himself;—"I'll never buy anything at that store again!" And thus, without any reference to the sin he committed, his lying is unprofitable.

A fashionable lady, once, was busy doing something in which she did not wish to be interrupted. She called her servant, and said: "Biddy, I wish to be undisturbed to-day. If anybody calls for me, tell them *I am not at home.*"

How many fashionable ladies and others do this, without reflecting that they are not only breaking

the ninth commandment themselves, but teaching their servants to break it also ! In the evening this lady found, to her great distress, that one of her particular friends had been taken suddenly ill, and died during the day. She was very anxious to see her, and sent several messengers to bid her come, but these were always told she was not at home. You can imagine how dreadfully she must have felt when she understood this.

After all these instances of the unprofitableness of lying, I must give you one story to show the profitableness of telling the truth, before leaving this part of our subject.

It is related of a Persian mother that, on giving her son forty pieces of silver as his portion, she made him swear never to tell a lie, and then said ;—“ Go, my son ; I consign thee to God : we shall not meet again till the day of judgment.”

The youth went away, and the party he travelled with was attacked by robbers. One fellow asked the boy what he had got, and he said ;—“ Forty dinars are sewed up in my garments.” The robber laughed, and thought he was only jesting. Another asked him the same question, and received the same answer.

At last the chief called him, and asked him what he had. He said ;—“ I have told two of your people already, that I have forty dinars sewed up in my clothes.” He ordered the clothes to be ripped open, and found the money.

“ And how came you to tell this ? ” asked the chief.

“ Because,” replied the child, “ I would not be false to my mother, to whom I promised never to tell a lie.”

"Child," said the robber, "art thou so mindful, at thy tender years, of thy duty to thy mother, and am I insensible, at my age, of the duty I owe to God? Give me thy hand, that I may swear repentance on it."

He did so. His followers were all struck with the scene.

"You have been our leader in guilt," said they to the chief, "now be the same in the path of virtue." They immediately gave back what they had stolen, and began at once to lead an honest life.

We ought not to lie, or bear false witness, because it is *unprofitable*.

The third reason why we ought not to do this is because it is DANGEROUS.

Lying is like letting water through a bank. When it once begins to run, there is no telling where it will stop.

Here is a large ship. It is made up of a vast number of great pieces of timber, all fastened together. It is very strong. It can cross the ocean, breasting the storms, and riding over the angry billows, without receiving any harm. But what holds those pieces of timber together, and makes that ship so strong? Why, the bolts of iron, or copper, which are driven through her timbers.

Now, suppose it were possible, all at once, to draw every bolt and fastening out of that ship, as she sails over the ocean, What would become of her? She would fall to pieces directly, and all her cargo would be lost.

Well, every family, every village, or town, is like such a ship. It is made up of a number of persons bound together. And what binds them together? Why, truth, or confidence. Truth among people in

society, is like the bolt in the ship. If nobody told the truth, and people had no confidence in one another, they could no more live together, in families, or communities, and do business together, than a number of pieces of timber, without bolts to fasten them together, could make a ship.

Would it not be very dangerous to have a person on board a ship who had a machine for drawing the bolts out, and who was trying to use it all the time? Certainly it would. Well, *lying* is such a machine, in families, and societies. Every one who bears false witness, in any way, is using this machine. He is trying to draw the bolts out of families, and societies, so that they can't hold together. This is very dangerous.

Let me show you what injury may be done by lying.

There was a large river, across which several dams were built within the distance of a few miles. These dams were built to form as many ponds, and drive as many mills. But during a severe storm, which greatly swelled the river, the upper dam was carried away. This brought the flood with so much pressure on the second dam, that *that* went, too; and so with all the rest, one after another. If the first dam had been strong enough to resist the pressure of the current, none of the others would have given way. So it is with falsehood, and other sins. If we stop the *first* lie, we stop all the rest. If we are not disobedient the *first* time, we never shall be disobedient. If we do not use the *first* profane word, we never shall use the *second*. It is consenting to the *first* sin that does all the mischief.

Some time since, a youth about fifteen years of age, whose name was James, came to a city to reside. He was employed as a clerk in a store. He was

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faithful at first, and his employer liked him very much, and treated him with great confidence. One day he stepped into the store of a young man whose acquaintance he had formed. He was offered a glass of wine. He hesitated, but finally yielded, and drank it. On the following day, this young man called in at the store where James was employed. His employer was not in at the time. James thought he must return the kindness of his young friend on the previous day, and accordingly he treated *him* to a glass of wine. But in drawing the liquor, he did not close the stop-cock securely, and it was left running a little. As his employer passed through the store, he discovered it.

"Have you been at this barrel, James?" he asked.

The youth hesitated, as if there was a struggle in his breast between right and wrong, but finally replied,—

"No, sir."

"Here the first dam was carried away. We shall see how the others followed.

His employer looked as if he doubted it, but said no more.

The next day the young man came in again, and said to the owner of the store;—"Will you sell me a barrel of wine, such as James gave me yesterday?" The gentleman gave a searching look at James, who felt almost ready to sink into the earth. He took the first opportunity to see the young man, and asked him to tell his employer that he drew the wine himself. Here was another dam gone. The young man promised to do so, and he would treat him to an oyster-supper. James agreed. Both parties fulfilled the agreement. But James had no money of his own, and

hence he took some from the drawer in the store to pay for the supper. Here was another dam gone. After the oyster-supper, he was invited to gamble. At first he declined; but then, thinking he might make as much money as he had taken from his employer, and thus be able to replace it, he yielded. He played, and lost. But still, supposing he might win, he continued to take money from the store, until it was missed. Seeing that he was likely to be detected, he resolved one night that he would take £40 that were in the desk, and endeavour to win enough to replace all he had taken from his employer.

At midnight he arose. He entered the store, took the £40, and went to the gambling-house, where he *lost the whole*. Now he was desperate. What could he do? He did this. Knowing that his employer had money in a certain bank, he forged a check in his name. He hastened to the bank and presented it. It was discovered to be a forgery. He was taken up, and sent to the penitentiary. Thus all the dams were swept away. And all this followed from that *first lie*. If James had told the truth then, the first dam would have been protected, and all the others saved.

This shows the truth of our third reason. We ought not to bear false witness, or tell a lie, because it is a *dangerous* thing.

Our fourth and last reason is, we ought not to do it, because it is a WICKED thing.

There are two things that show us how wicked it is to bear false witness.

What God SAYS of those who do it; and what God DOES with them. These both show us how wicked it is.

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Now, look at what God says of those who lie, or bear false witness.

He says in one place ;—"Ye shall not deal falsely, neither lie, one to another." Levit. xix. 11. He says in another place ;—"The Lord *hates* a false witness that speaketh lies." Prov. vi. 19. Again He says ;—"He that speaketh lies shall perish." Prov. xix. 5. He says ;—"A lying tongue is but for a moment." Prov. xii. 19. And in another place, He says ;—"Lying lips are an *abomination* unto the Lord." Prov. xii. 22. How fearfully wicked that must be, about which God uses language so strong as this ! Who would want to be an *abomination* before Him who is the wisest, and best, and most gracious of all beings ? When you are tempted to tell a lie, of any kind, or under any circumstances, think of what God says about lying, and say to yourself,—shall I make myself *hateful* in the sight of God ?

What God *says* of lying, shows how wicked it is.

But then look at what God *does* with liars !

You know we read in the last two chapters of the New Testament, of a glorious vision which the apostle John had of heaven. As it appeared before him, it was more beautiful than anything he had ever seen or thought of. It was like a great city. Its foundations were of precious stones. Its walls were made of jewels. Its gates were made of pearl. Its streets were paved with golden stones, but the gold was like crystal, as transparent as glass. A river of clear water flowed through the city. On each side of the river, the tree of life was growing. He saw the throne of God, and of the Lamb, within the city. There is no night there. No sorrow—no

crying—no sin. He saw the angels going in and out of the city. He saw the redeemed from among men there too. They were clothed in white raiment, and were walking with Jesus beside that beautiful river.

Presently, he came to the gate of the city. When he looked over the gate, he saw some writing. This writing told who they were, that should not be allowed to enter into the city. He was very anxious to read that writing, and find out who they were, who should never go into that beautiful place.

He read the writing. He has told us what it was. This was part of it;—*"There shall in no wise enter herein, anything that—MAKETH A LIE!"* Think of this. *No admittance for liars.* This is written as with a sunbeam over the gate of heaven. Bear this in mind; when you are tempted to tell a lie.

But if liars cannot enter heaven, what becomes of them? If God does not let them go into that glorious city, what does He do with them? There is one dreadful passage of scripture which tells us. We read, Rev. xxi. 8, "All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." This is fearful indeed!

What God *says* of liars, and *what* God *does* with them, both help to prove how wicked a thing it is to lie.

Thus we have had four reasons why we should not bear false witness. Let us see if we can recollect them.

We ought not to do it, in the *first place*, because it is a *MEAN thing*; *secondly*, because it is an *UNPROFITABLE thing*; *thirdly*, because it is a *DANGEROUS thing*; *and fourthly*, because it is a *WICKED THING*.

In conclusion, let me entreat you to make it a point, on every occasion, to speak the truth. Let this be a settled rule with you; a rule, too, that shall never be broken. Let nothing ever

tempt you to tell a lie. God calls Himself "The God of truth." He loves the truth; and while "lying lips are an abomination to Him," those that speak truly are said to be "His delight."

Speaking the truth, is the thing that especially distinguishes Him. And this is one of the ways in which we should strive to be like God. What an honour it is for any young person to have it said of him, he *always speaks the truth!* A crown of gold upon the head, would not be half so desirable an ornament, as a crown of truth.

"Oh! 'tis a lovely thing for youth
To walk betimes in wisdom's way!
To fear a lie, to speak the truth,
That we may trust to all they say."

If you ever find yourself saying what is not true, repent of it as a great sin. Pray God, for Jesus' sake, to forgive you. And ask Him to give you grace to forsake every false way and word;—to hate lying, and always to love and speak the truth.

HYMN ON THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

I must not let my tongue
A word of falsehood speak,
Which may my humblest neighbour wrong,
And God's commandments break.

Nor must I seek to throw
Suspicion on his deeds ;
For I may not the motive know,
From which the act proceeds.

I must not harshly judge,
When others go astray ;
Or in my spirit bear a grudge,
To prompt the words I say.

For, when I look within,
And see the evil there,
I scarcely think another's sin
Can with my own compare !

Then let the law of love
My guide in all things be ;
And may I by its judgment prove
The good and ill I see.

Dear Saviour ! let me keep
Thy pattern in my view,
And always strive to think and speak
As Thou would'st have me do !

The Tenth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife; nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's."—Exodus xx. 17.

SUPPOSE that we were farmers. We move out to the West, and buy a farm. A large part of our farm is covered with forest trees. We want to clear a portion of it, and turn it into fields, where we can raise Indian corn or wheat. We cut down the trees, and split up and haul away the timber. But after all this, the stumps remain in the ground; and if nothing is done to them, they will soon begin to sprout up again. It is very important for us, as farmers to get those stumps all removed.

Somebody has invented a machine, that is called a "Root Extractor." It has great, strong, iron hooks. These are fastened to the roots, and then by turning a wheel, or crank, connected with some very powerful machinery, the tough, crooked, gnarled roots are torn out by main force. It would be a grand thing for us, on our western farm, to have one of these Root Extractors. Then, how nicely we should get our field cleared! We should go to work with one stump after another; and, in a little while, they would be all gone, and we should have no more trouble with them.

My dear children, our hearts are like a field, full

of trees. This field has to be cleared. The trees here, are our sins, the wicked feelings and tempers that belong to us. When we are converted, and our hearts are renewed, by the grace of Jesus, then these trees are cut down. But the roots of them remain. Even when we become Christians, we find the roots of our old sins springing up again. And covetousness is the worst of these roots. You remember that St Paul says,—“The love of money,”—(this means, coveting, or desiring money)—“is the root of all evil.”—1 Tim. v. 10. It is very important for us to have these roots removed.

Now the tenth commandment may well be called God's great “Root Extractor.” If we pray to Him for grace to understand, and keep it, we shall find that it pulls up sin by the roots from our hearts, and prevents it from growing there. This is what the commandment was intended to do ; and this is what it does, wherever it is properly kept. It plucks sin up by the roots, and leaves the ground of our hearts clear, for the good seed of God's grace to grow in.

Now let us look at this commandment.

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house ; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife ; nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.”

The first four words of this commandment contain the substance of what it requires of us.

“Thou shalt not covet.” To covet means, to have an unlawful desire for something that belongs to another.

Here is a money-changer's office. In the window are vessels full of gold and silver coin, of different kinds. Bundles of bank-notes, too, are lying piled up there. There comes a man along. Perhaps he is

very poor. He stands before that window. He gazes on those shining stores,—those heaps of notes,—and as he gazes, an unlawful desire to possess them springs up in his heart, and he whispers to himself,—“Oh! how I wish I had that money!”

In indulging that wish, and thinking how it could be accomplished, he is coveting his neighbour's silver and gold. This wishing, or coveting, if it be allowed to go on will grow up into the desire to *get* that money. If the man cannot get it in a *right* way, he will try to get it in a *wrong* way. It will make him a thief or robber. Here you see how coveting is to stealing, just what the root is to the tree. The tree grows out of the root; and so stealing grows out of coveting. But the tenth commandment forbids us to covet. Hence I say, it is God's *great root extractor*. It pulls up these roots of evil from our hearts.

Whenever we allow ourselves to covet, or to wish for *anything* that belongs to another, we are guilty of the sin of breaking this commandment. It is a very plain commandment. There is no difficulty in understanding what it means. It is not necessary to say anything more for the purpose of explaining it. The most important thing is for us to consider some of the reasons why we should not covet.

There are four reasons to be considered.

We should not covet, in the first place, because it is UNSATISFYING.

If we get the things we covet, instead of being satisfied we shall only want more.

If you put a tub, without any bottom to it, under a pump, and begin to pump the water into it, how long will it take you to fill it? You *never* can fill it. Well, our covetous desires are like a tub without a bottom. And trying to get satisfied by indulging

them, is just like trying to fill a tub with water, when there is no bottom to it.

Suppose here is a fire burning. How soon will it go out, if you keep putting on wood all the time? It won't go out at all. If you want to make it go out, you must stop putting on wood.

A Christian father, once, wanted to teach his little son this lesson, so that he would not be likely to forget it. He asked him this question;—"Willie, when do you suppose a man will have money enough to satisfy him?"

"When he's got five hundred pounds more than he needs to pay all his expenses."

"No," answered his father.

"When he's got *five* thousand more than he needs," said Willie.

"No," said the father again.

"*Ten* thousand."

"No."

"*Twenty* thousand."

"No."

"*Fifty* thousand."

"No."

Willie thought he would make one more desperate guess that would be sure to hit the mark. So he cried out,—

"Well, when he's got a *hundred* thousand pounds."

But still his father met him with the same short answer, "No."

"Then I'll give it up," said Willie in despair.

"When he has got, — *a little more*, — than he now has," said his father, "and that is—never. If he gets one thousand he wishes to have *two*. When he gets *two* he wants *five*, then he wants *ten*,—then

twenty—fifty,—then a hundred thousand, and so on, till he has grasped the whole world ; and then, like Alexander, he would be ready to weep because there were no other worlds for him to possess.

Not long ago, a rich farmer died in Chester county, Pennsylvania. When a young man, he was quite poor. After a while he managed to buy a few acres of land. From time to time he added more and more to them, till he found himself the owner of the largest farm in the township. Afterwards, as he was very successful, he managed to buy first one farm, and then another, till seven or eight of the largest farms in the neighbourhood belonged to him. At last he took sick. The physician came to see him. He told him his disease could not be cured. He must die in a short time. On hearing this, his reply was ;—

"Oh ! what a pity ! If I could only live fifteen years longer, I should own all Chester county."

"How strange it is," said a young man, one day, to Dr Franklin, "that when men get rich, they are just as unsatisfied and anxious to make money, as when they were poor."

There was a little child playing in the room near them. "Johnny, come here," said Dr F.

The little fellow came up to him. "Here, my man, is an apple for you," said he, handing one from a fruit-basket on the table. It was so large that the child could hardly grasp it. He then gave it a second, which filled the other hand ; and, picking out a third, remarkable for its size and beauty, he said, "Here's another." The child tried hard to hold this last apple between the other two ; but it dropped on the carpet, and rolled away over the floor. On seeing this, he burst into tears.

"See," said Dr F., there is a *little man* with more riches than he can enjoy, but not satisfied."

Before the time of our Saviour, there was a celebrated Grecian king, whose name was Pyrrhus. He had a flourishing kingdom, with everything about him to make him comfortable. But being a great soldier, he was not satisfied without trying to conquer other countries. He was preparing to go to war with the Romans. One day, before they started a wise man named Cineas, belonging to his court, said to him—"Sire, the Romans are a brave and warlike people; but if we conquer them what shall we do next?"

"The Romans once conquered," answered Pyrrhus, "no city will resist us; we shall then be the masters of all Italy."

"Having subdued all Italy, what shall we do next?" asked Cineas.

"Then we shall take Sicily," said Pyrrhus.

"Will that put an end to the war?" inquired Cineas.

"By no means," replied Pyrrhus. "Then Lybia and Carthage will soon be ours; and no enemies will be able to stand before us."

"Very true," said Cineas; "and when all these are in our possession, what shall we then do?"

"Then," said the king, smiling, "we shall stay at home, and enjoy ourselves."

"Well, sire," observed the wise man, "and why can't we stay at home, and enjoy ourselves *now*, without all this trouble and danger?"

But Pyrrhus would not take the advice of his friend. He went to war. He was finally killed in battle, and never found the enjoyment which he had promised himself.

We should not covet, because it is *unsatisfying*. This is the first reason.

Again, *we should not covet, because it is DISGRACEFUL*. This is the *second* reason.

We read of some places where, when people commit certain sins, they are punished by having the first letter of the word that represents their sin, branded with a red-hot iron upon the cheek, or forehead. Here, for instance, is a man who has been thieving. He is a thief. He has the letter T burnt upon his brow. Wherever he goes, he carries the mark of his sin upon him. Every one who sees him, knows that he is a *thief*. Would not *that* be a disgraceful thing? Yes. Would you want to keep company with such a person, or have any thing to do with him? Certainly not; unless you knew that he had truly repented of his sin, and would never steal again.

But a person who *covets*, is very nearly related to a thief. They are *first cousins* to each other. Nay, the relationship is closer than that. They are like the same person, or thing, as seen at different times, and under different circumstances.

Let me illustrate this. Here, for instance, is a chicken almost ready to be hatched; and there is a chicken that is already hatched. What is the difference between them? Why, one is *in* the shell, while the other is *out* of it. That is all the difference. There is nothing in the world but the thickness of that thin shell, which separates one of them from the other. A slight tapping,—a very little pecking, on the end of that shell, and it is broken through; and then out comes the chicken as lively and active as its little brother that came out yesterday.

Now just such is the relation that exists between a covetous person and a thief. There is nothing but a thin shell that separates them from each other. The covetous person is a thief *in* the shell. The thief is a covetous person *out* of the shell. Let a covetous person see something that he desires *very much*; and let an opportunity of *taking* it be offered, and how very soon, like the chicken ready to be hatched, he will break through the shell, and come out in his true character as a thief.

Now, suppose that God, in His providence, should cause to come out upon the foreheads of people, in lines as of fire, a letter representing the sin that each one had committed, what would be the difference between the marks on the forehead of a thief, and of a covetous person? They would both have the same letter. This same disgraceful, dreadful *T* would be on each. There it would stand, the blazing, burning mark of sin and shame, on each; only the thief would have a rather larger, brighter *T*, than that seen on the forehead of the covetous person. Then, surely, if coveting is so closely related to thieving, we should be very careful that we do not covet, because it is *disgraceful*. This is the second reason.

But again, we should not covet, because it is INJURIOUS. This is the *third* reason.

There are several ways in which it is injurious to indulge a covetous spirit.

Sometimes it is injurious to a person's *character*. There was oncé a nobleman, in Italy, who was going to be married. Great preparations were made for the wedding feast. Every thing necessary for the occasion had been procured, except some fish, of which the Italians are very fond. But the sea had been so rough for many days, that the fishermen in

the neighbourhood had been quite unsuccessful. The day before the wedding was to take place, however, a fisherman came along, who had a fine large turbot for sale. He knocked at the gate of the nobleman's residence, and inquired if they wanted any fish. The porter who kept the gate was a very covetous man. He was ready to take advantage of every opportunity to get a little money, whether the way of getting it was right or wrong. He told the fisherman that they wanted a fish very much in his master's house, and as it was for a wedding feast, they would be willing to give a good price for it; but he said he would not let the man in, unless he would promise to give him one half of what he might get for it.

The fisherman thought this was so unjust that, at first, he refused to do it. But finding he could not get in on any other terms, he consented. As he went in, however, he made up his mind to teach the porter a lesson that he would not soon forget.

He was ushered into the presence of the nobleman, who was so delighted to see so fine a fish, that he offered to give the man any price he might ask for it. "You will think, perhaps, I am naming a strange price," said the fisherman, "when I tell you that a hundred lashes, laid on my bare back is the price of my fish, and I will not take anything else for it."

The nobleman was greatly surprised. He thought the man was joking, and tried to reason him out of his strange notion. But finding the fisherman resolute in his demands, he said ;—

"Well, well, the poor fellow is certainly crazy. We must have the fish, however. Give him his price and let him be paid in my presence; but lay it on very lightly."

As soon as fifty lashes had been given him, he cried;—"Hold, hold! I have a partner in this business, and he must have his share of the price of the fish."

"What!" exclaimed the nobleman, "is it possible that there are two such mad fellows in the world? Who is your partner, and he shall be sent for at once?"

"You need not go very far for him," said the fisherman; "you will find him at your gate, in the shape of your own porter, who would not let me in until I promised he should receive half of what I got for my turbot."

"Oh! oh!" said the nobleman, "bring him in instantly. Let him have his share, by all means; and lay it on soundly."

The porter received *his* share of the price asked for the fish. Then he was immediately discharged, while the fisherman was amply rewarded. The porter lost his character and his situation. He certainly found covetousness injurious. It injured his character.

Sometimes covetousness is injurious by *causing great trouble to others*, besides the person who is guilty of this sin.

Look at the case of Achan, mentioned in the Bible—Joshua, 7th chapter. The children of Israel have just crossed over Jordan. They are about to take the city of Jericho. God charges them to put all the people in the city to death, and not to take any of the spoils of the city to themselves, but to set it all apart for His service. He commands them solemnly to mind this order, and declares that if they do not, it will bring a curse upon them, and be a trouble to the whole nation.

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Now the walls of Jericho have fallen down. The city is taken. The people in it are put to death. The Israelites are gathering all the spoil together, according to God's commandment.

There is Achan. He enters a fine looking house. No one is with him. He finds a wedge of gold, a bag of silver, and a beautiful garment. How tempting they look! He *covets* them. He says to himself;—"How I should like to have these! And why may I not? There is no one here to see. They won't be missed, amid all the spoil of this great city. I'll take them."

He carries them quietly away; digs a hole in his tent, and buries them there. He thinks no one has seen him. Poor, foolish man! he forgets that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil, and the good." God saw it all, and the Bible tells us how He made it known.

The Israelites go on to take another city. They send their army against it. Their army is defeated, and a number of soldiers killed. They come back discouraged. All the people are afraid. Look at Joshua, their brave captain. He has rent his clothes, and fallen to the ground; there he spends the day, weeping and praying before the ark of the Lord. All the elders of Israel are there with him. Their clothes are rent, and their heads covered with ashes. The progress of a large army is stopped, and hundreds of thousands of people are plunged in sorrow and distress. And what has occasioned all this trouble? *The covetousness of one man!*

You know how his sin was found out, and how he was punished for it. Achan had *troubled all Israel*.

A grain of sand is a small thing. But suppose I open my watch, and drop it in among the works,

what effect will it have? It will stop it. Yes, and unless it is gotten out, the watch will be of no use. The different tribes of Israel were like wheels of a great watch. Achan's one sin was like the grain of sand dropped in among them. *It stopped the watch.* It could not be set in motion again until the grain of sand was taken out. The sin of Achan occasioned great trouble to others, as well as himself. In *this way*, covetousness is injurious.

And then it is often *injurious too, as occasioning the death of those who are guilty of it.*

I might mention a great many instances to illustrate this part of our subject, but I shall give you only one.

Some years ago, there was a large ship, called the Kent, going from England to the East Indies. On her voyage she caught fire. The flames could not be put out. While she was burning, another vessel came in sight, and offered to take off her crew and passengers. The sea was very rough, and the only way to get the people off the burning ship was to let them down by ropes, from the end of a boom, into the little boats that were tossed about, like corks, by the rough waves below.

One of the sailors, who knew that the mate had a large quantity of gold in his possession, determined to get it, and take it with him. So he broke into the mate's cabin, forced open his desk, and taking two thousand dollars in gold pieces, put them in a belt, and fastened it round his waist. His turn came to leave the burning ship. He got out to the end of the boom, slipped down the rope, and let go, expecting to drop right into the boat that was beneath him. But a sudden movement of the waves carried the boat out of his reach, and he was plunged

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into the sea. He was an excellent swimmer, and if it had not been for the gold he had coveted, he would have risen like a cork to the surface, and soon been safe in the boat. But the weight of the money round his waist, made him sink like lead, in the mighty waters. He never rose again to the surface. Ah! as he felt the golden weight dragging him deeper and deeper down into the vast ocean, he must have understood, plainly enough, *how* injurious covetousness is!

The fourth and last reason why we should not covet is, because it is SINFUL.

It breaks this commandment. And the worst thing you can say of any sin is, that it breaks God's law. Remember this, whenever you are tempted to covet any thing. You break God's commandment by it. How sinful this is!

But by coveting we break *two* commandments at once. Besides breaking the tenth, we at the same time break the *first* commandment, by committing this sin. You know the first commandment forbids idolatry. It says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." But the Bible tells us that "covetousness is idolatry." Coloss. iii. 5. This means, that when people become covetous they put their gold in the place of God. They love it more than they love God; they think of it more than they think of God; they trust to it more than they trust to God. This is making a god of it; and idolatry consists in having some other god than the Lord.

But there is even more than this to be said about covetousness. The covetous man *breaks the whole ten commandments at once.*

Do you ask how I make this out? Easily enough. You know our Saviour said the ten commandments

were all embraced in *two*; viz., to love God with all our hearts; and to love our neighbour as ourselves. But the covetous man loves his *gold* with all his heart. By this he breaks the first four commandments. He loves his gold more than he loves his neighbour. By this he breaks the last six commandments. What a dreadfully wicked thing covetousness is! St Paul tells us, as was said at the beginning of this sermon, that covetousness, or "the love of money, is the root of all evil." This means, that it leads people to commit all kinds of sin. It makes them unkind, hard-hearted, cruel, and unjust. It leads to violence, bloodshed, and murder.

When the Spaniards conquered Mexico, they killed so many people, that it might almost be said they *waded in blood* to get possession of it. And what was the chief object they had in view? It was to get the gold, which was found there in such wonderful profusion.

When the emperor found he could not protect his city against the fierce invaders, he collected his principal treasures together, and threw them into the lake on which his capital was built. The Spanish general, Cortes, was so much disappointed at finding so little gold, that he ordered a huge gridiron to be made, and then put the emperor on it, and roasted him over a slow fire to make him tell where his treasures were.

The history of the world is full of the horrible things that men have done from a desire to get gold.

We have considered four reasons why we should not covet. *Because it is UNSATISFYING; because it is DISGRACEFUL; because it is INJURIOUS; and because it is SINFUL.*

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Now my dear friends, we have concluded our illustrations of the commandments. This last one makes an excellent finish to them. You know that when a carpenter drives in a nail which he wishes shall hold very fast, he takes his hammer, and if it be a wrought iron nail, he bends over the end of it where it has come through, and drives it again into the wood. This is called *clenching* the nail. This makes it firm. Now it cannot be drawn out.

And just in the same way the tenth commandment is a sort of *clencher* to all the rest. If we keep this commandment properly, we shall be in very little danger of breaking any of the others. It directs our attention to our hearts; and teaches us to keep them right. If we can only keep our hearts right, we shall not have much trouble with anything else. This is the reason why the Bible says, "Keep thine heart with *all diligence*, for out of it are the issues of life."

But the very hardest thing we have to do, is to keep the heart right. If we attempt to do this in our own strength, we shall succeed about as well as if we should stand at the door of our house, and try to keep the air out by beating it with our fists. In spite of all we can do, evil thoughts will creep in, and covetous desires will spring up. Well, what should we do, when we find them there? We should be sorry for having them, and ask God to forgive us, and take them all away.

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, *cleanse the thoughts of our hearts* by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit; that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

And when we feel our need of the help of God's grace to enable us to keep His commandments, how beautifully we are taught to pray for this.

"O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of Thy laws, and in the works of Thy commandments; that through Thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

If we pray thus, with all our hearts, we shall find these commandments like fences set up on either side of "The King's Highway;" and we shall find that *way* leading us right through the wilderness of this world, to the glory and blessedness of our Father's house above. May it please God to guide us all into this glorious way, and bring us at last to His heavenly rest, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

HYMN ON THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

I MUST not nurse within my soul,
One spark of sin's unhallowed fire;
Or yield my heart to the control
Of aught that speaks a wrong desire

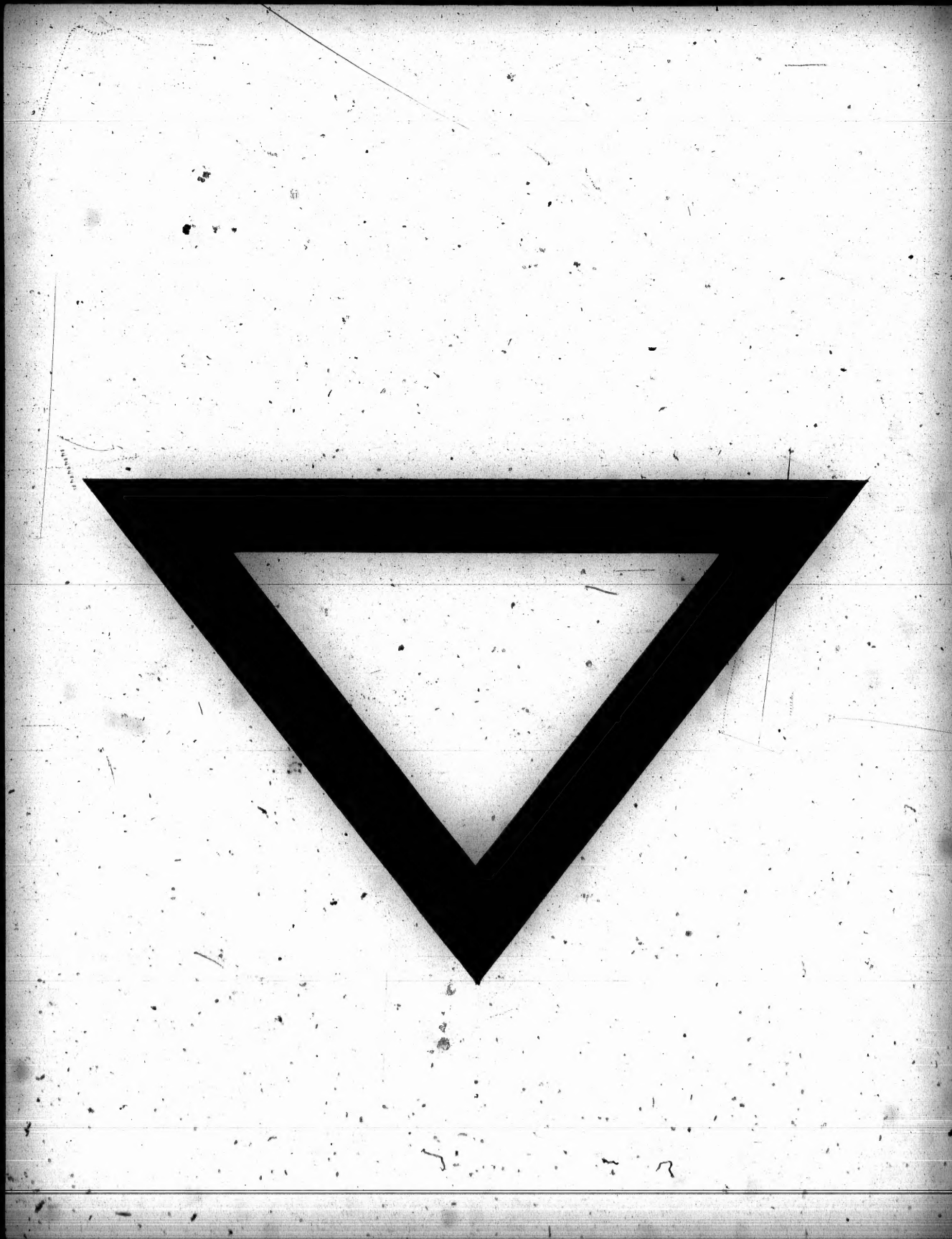
If others, in the flush of health,
Can richly dress and brightly shine;
I must not envy them their wealth,
Or wish that aught of theirs was mine.

If God should call me to be poor,
Still I'll be thankful for my lot :
For Jesus trod this path before,
And well I know He murmured not !

I must not turn with envious eyes,
On aught that others may possess ;
Or wish, whatever God denies,
To make their sums of blessings less,

Is there, then, nought beneath, above,
That I may covet to possess ?
Yes, there's the Saviour's boundless love,
With which He waits, my soul to bless !

To me, this treasure, Lord, impart ;
Thy pardoning grace, oh ! let me prove ;
Write Thou Thy Laws upon my heart,
And make me covet all Thy Love !



the ninth commandment themselves, but teaching their servants to break it also! In the evening this lady found, to her great distress, that one of her particular friends had been taken suddenly ill, and died during the day. She was very anxious to see her, and sent several messengers to bid her come, but these were always told she was not at home. You can imagine how dreadfully she must have felt when she understood this.

After all these instances of the unprofitableness of lying, I must give you one story to show the profitableness of telling the truth, before leaving this part of our subject.

It is related of a Persian mother that, on giving her son forty pieces of silver as his portion, she

"Child," said the robber, "art thou so mindful, at thy tender years, of thy duty to thy mother, and am I insensible, at my age, of the duty I owe to God? Give me thy hand, that I may swear repentance on it."

He did so. His followers were all struck with the scene.

"You have been our leader in guilt," said they to the chief, "now be the same in the path of virtue." They immediately gave back what they had stolen, and began at once to lead an honest life.

We ought not to lie, or bear false witness, because it is *unprofitable*.

The third reason why we ought not to do this is because it is DANGEROUS.

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